

REMARKS

Pending Claims

A Request for Continued Examination (RCE) has been filed to request entry of the Amendment filed February 18, 2009.

Claims 1-6 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ohishi et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,019,945. Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and for the following reasons.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6, which are the independent claims, to set forth that the plural analysis units are provided with power from a power supply through a power switch. *See* page 7, lines 22-26 for support of the Amendment. Additionally, claims 1 and 6 have been amended to set forth that the central control device controls each of the analysis units through the information control network. *See* page 3, lines 22-28 of the Specification. Claims 1 and 6, as amended, set forth that the control device has a separation unit for separating one of the analysis units from the information network according to amended claims 1 and 6. *See* page 3, lines 15-17 of the Specification which sets forth that the control device has a separation unit.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner states that the claims are directed to an apparatus and must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function alone. Accordingly, Applicants set forth that the separation unit separates an analysis unit from the information network to enable shutoff of a power supply of the one analysis unit by the power switch, while others of the analysis units are maintained with power from a power supply and are connected to the information network. These structural features of the claimed analyzer are not shown or fairly disclosed by Ohishi.

Ohishi does not disclose separating an analysis unit from the information network to enable shutoff of a power supply of the analysis unit by a power switch while others of the analysis units are maintained with power from a power supply and are connected to the information network, as set forth in amended claim 1. Further, Ohishi does not disclose shutoff of a power supply by a power switch of one of the analysis units when the analysis unit is set to the power-off enable mode by the analysis unit button while other analysis units are maintained with power from a power supply and are connected to the information network, as set forth in amended claim 6.

The host control computer 40 of Ohishi executes operational control of the analysis portion, rack transfer system and other components of the analyzer system, however Ohishi does not disclose a central control device having a separation unit as claimed by Applicants. Therefore, shut down of the entire system is required to replace a failed analysis unit. This conclusion is consistent with the parts of the Ohishi reference that are relied upon in the Office Action.

Mainly, Ohishi discloses in column 10, lines 1-23 that the system arrangement enables a failed analysis unit to be removed and that the system is able to operate after the removal of the failed unit. Further, Ohishi discloses that other analysis units can be instructed by the control unit to take over the abnormal analysis unit's operation after it has been removed. However, there is no disclosure by Ohishi of a separation unit that separates an analysis unit from the information network to enable shutoff of a power supply of the one analysis unit by the power switch, while others of the analysis units are maintained with power from a power supply and are connected to the information network. Accordingly, Ohishi does not anticipate claims 1 and 6, as amended.

Further, Ohishi does not anticipate claims 3-5, which set forth a mode setting screen for displaying the conveying unit and the analysis units. Column 4, lines 47-50 of Ohishi are relied upon in the rejection for disclosing an operator panel that specifies any one of the displayed conveying line and a displayed analysis unit. However, Ohishi does not disclose the elements of the invention claimed in claims 3-5 with respect to a mode setting screen which includes displaying the conveying unit and the analysis units for specifying any one of the display conveying unit and the displayed analysis unit to be separated from the information network by the central control device.

Claim 2 is not anticipated by Ohishi, at least for being dependent from base claim 1, which has been asserted to be allowable for the foregoing reasons.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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